

REMARKS

The office action of July 29, 2004 rejected claims 1-9. This response addresses the bases for rejection. The applicant acknowledges and appreciates a brief telephonic interview with the Examiner on September 8, 2004 in which a draft version of this response was supplied but no agreement regarding allowability was reached.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER SECTION 103

CLAIMS 1-9 AND 20-26

The office action rejected claims 1-9 and 20-26 under Section 103 in view of U.S. Patent Nos. 6,594,547 to Manabe et al. and 5,793,639 to Yamazaki et al. Each of these, however, is quite different from the claimed invention and would not produce the claimed invention if combined.

The Yamazaki system is a self-service check-in system. At the first location, the passenger checks in and baggage tags are issued. Because it is designed to be fully-self-service, the bags are tagged and deposited onto the conveyor without presenting the boarding pass at a second location. As Yamazaki explains at column 13:

When the user having baggage moves to the baggage inserting unit 4, on confirming through the monitor camera 37 monitoring the user standing at a front thereof, the CPU 48 controls the gate control section 47 to open the opening and closing gate 21 (S8). The gate 21 is usually kept closed in order to prevent goods except passenger's baggage from being put into the baggage inserting unit 4 without permission. On opening the gate 21, the CPU 40 judges whether all user's baggage have been inserted in the baggage inserting unit 4 (S9) by comparing the number of baggage with the number of issued tags transmitted from the CPU 39. Namely, it is judged as "No" if the number of baggage already inserted does not reach the number of issued tags and as "Yes" if the number of baggage inserted reaches the number of issued tags. 43 50 55

Thus, Yamazaki teaches that a camera system is used to follow the user as he or she obtains a boarding pass and then deposits bags, with the camera system verifying that the user is

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701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4800
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authorized to do so. Nothing in Yamazaki suggests that the boarding pass is to be presented at a second location (as in claim 1) or that the boarding pass is scanned (as in claim 3) at the second location. Indeed, with Yamazaki there would be no motivation to do so because the baggage tags have already been issued at the first location and Yamazaki teaches that a camera is used to authenticate the deposition of bags at the bag drop location.

The Manabe system is a general baggage management system in which baggage is tagged for rapid identification and removal from an aircraft in the event a passenger does not board. The Office Action suggests that Manabe teaches, among other things, checking baggage in accordance with information on the boarding pass, wherein the information comprises a destination and number of bags to be checked. Although Manabe does teach producing a boarding pass with such information, Manabe does not teach instructing passengers to obtain such a boarding pass at a first location, then present it at a second location to check bags in accordance with the information on the boarding pass.

The principal operation of Manabe is explained at column 3 as follows:

Next, the operation of the baggage managing system will be explained. A passenger P exchanges an air ticket for a boarding pass 9 and thereafter checks baggage 1 together with the boarding pass 9 at a baggage reception counter. A 20 person in charge of the baggage reception counter accepts the baggage 1, operating a computer terminal for the counter 4. That is to say, when the person in charge, operating the baggage numbers input unit 41, inputs the number of baggages 1 checked by the passenger P, the boarding pass 45 read/write unit 40 reads magnetically the boarding information from the magnetic recording part 1a of the boarding pass 9, and it also generates baggage ID in accordance with the seat number in the boarding information and the number of baggages, writes in letters the baggage ID onto the 50 character recording part 1c, and writes in bar code the passenger's ID, flight number and the baggage ID onto the bar code recording part 1b of the boarding pass 9. The tag issuing unit 42 issues a tag 10 having the character recording part 10a on which the flight number and the baggage ID 55 have been written in letters and the bar code recording part 10b on which the passenger's ID, the flight number and the baggage ID have been written in bar code. In this unit, the tags 10 whose number being equal to that of the baggage 1 checked are issued. The computer terminal for reception 60 counter 4 sends information such as the passenger's ID, the number of baggages and the flight number to the host computer 3. The host computer 3 records the passenger's ID, the number of baggages and the flight number in the first database 2A (STEP 1).

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Thus, as Manabe explains at lines 50-55, the Manabe system only obtains and writes the number of checked bags and related baggage information onto the boarding pass after the passenger moves to the baggage reception counter. Because this information is missing, the Manabe system suffers from a principal defect that the present invention seeks to overcome. The attendant working at the baggage reception counter must spend a greater amount of time interacting with the passenger in order to obtain this information because it was not previously obtained in an automated fashion. The Manabe system is therefore slower and less desirable. Moreover, the claimed aspect of checking bags in accordance with the boarding pass is missing. Dependent claim 4, for example, teaches that the boarding pass already indicates the number of bags to be checked before presenting it at the second location. This aspect is not taught or suggested by Manabe.

One of the features in claim 1 of the pending application is that the passenger obtains a boarding pass at a first location and then checks baggage at a second location. Manabe does not teach this aspect. Instead, Manabe discloses a single counter 4 that serves as a baggage reception counter *and* as a boarding pass read/write unit. Accordingly, there is no combination of Manabe and Yamazaki that produces the claimed invention, nor any motivation to combine them as suggested in the Office Action.

Claim 1 includes the limitation, “instructing the passenger to obtain a boarding pass at a first location” and “instructing the passenger to present the boarding the boarding pass at a second location.” One of the novel features of this claim is that it directs passengers to obtain boarding passes before checking baggage, but to indicate *at that time* the number of bags that will be checked. This speeds the baggage check-in process and reduces the time passengers must wait in line. Neither Manabe nor any of the other cited references disclose this claimed aspect of *instructing* passengers to obtain a boarding pass at a first location and then to *present* the

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boarding pass at a second location in order to check bags in accordance with information already contained on the boarding pass.

In accordance with the claimed invention, especially claim 4, the attendant at the bag check station knows how many bags the passenger will check, without even having to ask the passenger. Manabe does not teach or suggest printing baggage related information on a boarding pass at a first location, while checking bags later at a second location. Indeed, this would be contrary to the purpose of Manabe, which is only to ensure that the boarding pass reflects the number of bags *actually* checked, and not the number of bags the passenger *intends* to check. The claimed system in this regard runs counter to the very purpose of Manabe because Manabe wants to ensure that no baggage processing occurs until the bags are actually checked. Accordingly, neither Manabe nor the cited art anticipates or makes obvious the inventions of claims 1-4.

CLAIMS 11 AND 13-18

Claims 11 and 13-18 were rejected in view of the combination of Manabe and Yamazaki, and further in view of Barclay. Like Manabe, Barclay is concerned with ensuring that passengers who have checked bags actually board the aircraft. Barclay does not teach the use of a system as in claim this group of claims, comprising a boarding pass station configured to print a boarding pass (which in accordance with claim 11 includes an indication of the number of bags to be checked) and a baggage drop station at a second location having a computer and a scanner to scan the boarding pass and enable bags to be checked “only if the passenger has already checked in.” Nothing in Barclay combined with Manabe and Yamazaki teaches or suggests the claimed inventions.

CLAIM 10

The applicant notes that claim 10 was not addressed in the final Office Action, and respectfully contends that claim 10 should be allowable.

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CLAIMS 20-26

The applicant further notes that certain aspects within this group of claims are not found in the cited references of Yamazaki, Manabe, and Ross, and were not addressed in the final Office Action. For example, the various arrangements of sensors, barriers, and kiosk clusters are not addressed and not believed to be found in the prior art. The applicant respectfully contends that these claims should be allowable.

CONCLUSION

The applicant respectfully submits that the claims are now in condition for allowance, and requests reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims.

Respectfully submitted,

BLACK LOWE & GRAHAM^{PLLC}

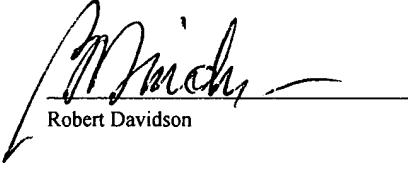


Lawrence D. Graham
Registration No. 40,001
Direct Dial: 206.381.3304

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